



# DEQ offers tips on how to report an environmental concern/complaint/threat

**T**he Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has Technician Level Emergency Responders available to provide 24 hour, 7 days a week response capabilities for environmental hazards or potential threat to the environment.

Citizens may report any complaint or non-emergency issues they are aware of to our Single Point of Contact hotline at (225) 219-3640 or 1-888-763-5424 (toll free in Louisiana only). After business hours, the Single Point of Contact number is 225-342-1234 or the toll free number. Complaints can also be reported online at <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/apps/forms/irf/forms>. DEQ will accept anonymous complaints only by phone during the business hours of 9am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday. In the event of an emergency, citizens should call their local emergency response agencies, 911 or the Department of Public Safety's 24-hour Hazardous Materials Hotline. Emergencies are determined by any condition that could reasonably be expected to (1) endanger the health and safety of the public, (2) cause significant adverse impact to the land water or air or (3) cause severe damage to property.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is one of several federal, state and local agencies that are part of the statewide response network. This network is mobilized by a call to the Hazardous Materials Hotline. Each of these agencies performs specific functions at the scene of an emergency while joining together in a "Unified Command" structure to address protective actions during the ongoing incident.

When reporting an environmental concern, be sure to be as comprehensive and provide as much information as possible. Provide your name, call back number, the specific location/address of the incident, the nature and cause of the concern, the time the event occurred, its current status and proximity to residential areas, and if any injuries or fatalities have occurred as a result. Be specific and be sure to include as much pertinent information as possible, in order that DEQ emergency personnel may respond accordingly.

Failing to provide as much information as possible about the event will be detrimental to the process. For example, providing the location of the incident is imperative so that emergency responders can access the site quickly and effectively. An incorrect address or property description can drastically slow down the emergency response capabilities and actually increase the potential environmental threat. Any obstruction that is known in advance should be mentioned, along with as much information as possible regarding landmarks or signage if the incident is in a rural setting. It is important to be as concise and as precise as possible when reporting the incident. The caller should never place themselves in danger while trying to collect information regarding an environmental complaint.